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Commentary on Questions presented for the USDA Farm Bill Listening Forum - 10-26-05- Burlington, Vermont. Hosted by Thomas Dorr

1. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?

The subsidy was not intended to make any family independently wealthy at the expense of the less favored farmers. Paying farmers a graduated, smaller amount per unit with a final cap is no more illegal than a graduated income tax. It seems to me that having a larger base of farmers in the whole country is more towards the public good, than having a small number of landowners owning land that they have very little knowledge of. Up until lately most farmland has been matched with the farmer.

2. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?

For the U.S. to compete with farmers from other countries means that our standard of living has to be less, for instance, in Poland with land as fertile as any in Iowa (1000+ years of plowing manure and straw back under), with a factory paycheck of \$3.00 an hour, with all of the machinery (including combines) made in Poland, with agricultural schools everywhere using the latest technology: how can the U.S. produce wheat cheaper than Poland? China is the largest producer of nitrogen fertilizer, and it undersells apple concentrate to the U.S. The people of India used to starve; now they produce enough food for their population and are the largest producer of milk in the world.

3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?

I think the USDA should look at what the E.U. is doing in Poland. The E.U. has changed its direction five times in 25 years. Even Dean Kleckner, a past president of the AFBF and a hog producer on a family farm in Iowa, got up in front of a French E.U. representative and said, "I hate to agree with you, but you have a better system than we do."

4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?

By giving credit to farmers who add organic matter; use a minimum of commercial fertilizers and herbicides. What I am arguing for is a grass, livestock (dairy), agriculture that is not into maximum production for the land or the cows.

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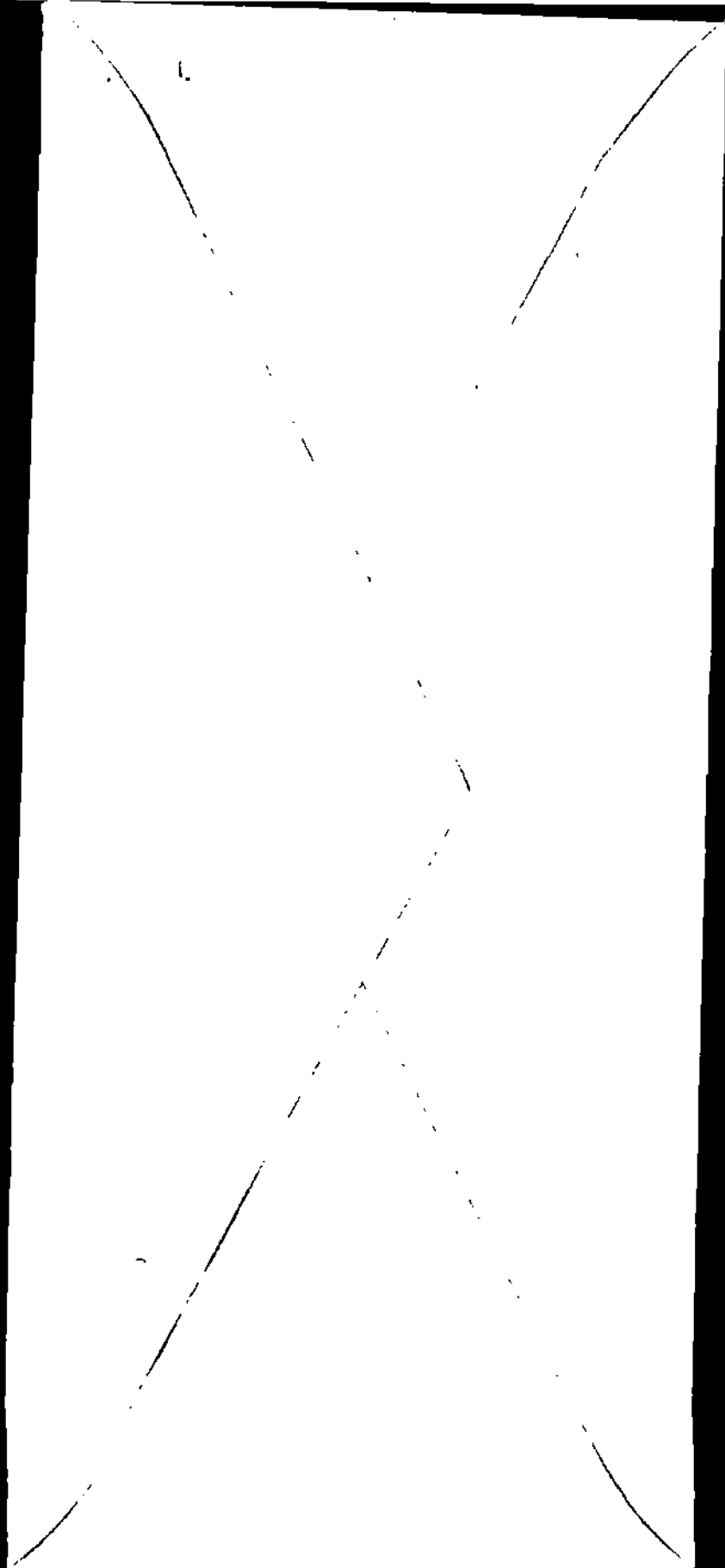
5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?

The end of the extension agricultural agent was the final nail in the coffin for Rutland County, and I think, Vermont. In addition those that thought that pumping BST into cows and pushing for huge farms, spelled the end for many farms that had prospered for 200 years, that had provided an idealistic social culture, and most important good family life, morals, and ideals.

6. How should agricultural product development, marketing and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

The USDA should fund all basic research. The original growth hormone research was done at Cornell in the '50's. Somebody found out how to make it in the laboratory. Monsanto took it as a monopoly to basically ruin the dairy industry.

Research funded by companies is for the company's economic benefit. Research is very often construed and distorted for the financial benefit of the company.



Newport Farm Real Estate Forum
Response to all zip questions

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Thank you so much for 44 yrs - Will leave

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